

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Thursday, March 04, 2021
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Thayn, Vice Chairman Crabtree, Senators Den Hartog, Woodward, Lent, Johnson, Cook, Ward-Engelking, and Nelson
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** None
- NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
- CONVENED:** **Chairman Thayn** called the meeting of the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:10 p.m.
- H 175** **Relating to Education; Provides Students With Access to In-Person Instruction Where Safety Requirements Can Be Developed at the Local Level.** **Chairman Thayn** informed the Committee that **H 175** would not be heard today but instead at the Committee's Monday meeting.
- H 172** **Relating to Extended Learning Opportunities; Codifies the Practice and Provides Certainty for Students and Parents That Students Can Earn Credit for Learning or Work Done Outside of the Traditional Classroom.** **Representative Gayann DeMordaunt** outlined the bill to the Committee.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Ward-Engelking** voiced concern about accountability, who provides the school credit, what type of testing is given to those who participate in the program, and who decides learning outside the classroom is worth credit. **Representative DeMordaunt** said districts would develop a policy and a way to acknowledge and evaluate the students skills before awarding credits. **Senator Ward-Engelking** asked if local districts have the option to participate. **Representative DeMordaunt** said districts do need to develop a policy but it would be up to them if they wished to offer credits for these activities. **Vice Chairman Crabtree** asked how credits are being given to those in 4H. **Representative DeMordaunt** said credits would be awarded on a mastery demonstration of skills and that criteria of what is considered a mastery skill would be set by the district.
- Senator Cook** asked for clarification on the fiscal note, which shows zero costs. He said that, since there is administrative work that needs to be done there would be a cost. **Representative DeMordaunt** said so much is already in place with the districts in offering these types of credit programs, and assessments and state standards cover almost every course, so administrative costs should be low. **Senator Nelson** asked how much flexibility the districts have in offering this credit option. **Representative DeMordaunt** said districts will be required to develop a policy to deal with this credit option. Section 33-404 of the bill adds an additional year for districts to develop a policy.
- TESTIMONY:** **Kate Haas**, representing Kestrel West and its Yes, Every Kid initiative, testified in support of **H 172**. **Ms. Haas** gave several examples of how this learning outside of the classroom program has been successful in various districts in the State.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Cook** asked if districts are going to be forced to offer credits for various outside activities if they do not wish to participate in the proposed program. **Ms. Haas** said such districts will be required to develop a policy but they will not be forced to accept outside activities for credit. **Chairman Thayn** asked how this bill could change the state of education in Idaho. **Ms. Haas** said Kestrel West hopes this bill would broaden options for students, giving them other avenues to obtain school credits, and help them engage in their education. **Senator Nelson** asked about the school board association's and administrator's stance on this bill. **Representative DeMordaunt** said they are neutral.

**MOTION:** **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **H 172** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Cook** seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** **Vice Chairman Crabtree** asked why can't students still do all of these fun things without getting school credits. **Senator Nelson** said he was conflicted about this bill but would vote aye, reserving the right to change his vote on the floor. **Senator Johnson** said various school superintendents expressed concerns to him about supposed hidden costs associated with this policy. **Senator Cook** said he will support the bill. He recounted an experience where a fellow classmate, who was ready to drop out of high school, actually stayed and graduated, because he was able to get credits for outside interests.

**VOICE VOTE:** **Senators Den Hartog, Lent, Cook, Ward-Engelking, Nelson** and **Chairman Thayn**, voted aye. **Senators Woodward, Johnson** and **Vice Chairman Crabtree** voted nay. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**H 173** **Relating to Education; Transfer the Mission, Oversight and Operations of the Idaho Office of School Safety and Security from the Division of Building Safety to the Office of the Idaho State Board of Education.** **Senator Den Hartog** outlined the bill for the Committee.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Lent** asked if the Idaho State Board of Education (ISBE) had sufficient resources to support the Office of School Safety and Security. **Matt Freeman**, Executive Director, ISBE, said there will be net zero transfer costs and ISBE has the resources to assume supervision of oversight and operations, and the physical space to make this happen. **Senator Lent** specifically asked if ISBE has the ability to absorb the function and tasks of this office. **Mr. Freeman** said Paul Munger will remain the Manager of School Safety and Security, with his own team, and that Mr. Munger will now report to Mr. Freeman.

**MOTION:** **Senator Nelson** moved to send **H 173** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Woodward** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Thayn** adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

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Senator Thayn  
Chair

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Florence Lince  
Secretary